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AN ENQUIRY INTO THE MERITS OF NATIONAL CHURCH  
ESTABLISHMENTS IN GENERAL, AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
IN PARTICULAR, AS INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF  
MORALITY AND RELIGION.

"Nothing is more necessary, either in a republic, an ecclesiastical establishment, or a monarchy, than a frequent reformation of the abuses that have, from time to time crept into them, by reducing them to their first principles, in order to restore their original vigour and reputation."—MACHIAVEL.

"Pure and genuine christianity never was, nor ever can be, the national religion of any country upon earth. It is a gold too refined to be worked up with any human institution, without a large portion of alloy; for no sooner is this small grain of mustard seed watered with the fertile showers of civil emoluments, than it grows up into a large and spreading tree, under the shelter of whose branches the birds of prey and plunder will not fail to make for themselves comfortable habitations, and thence deface its beauty, and destroy its fruits."—JENYNS.

In pursuing the above enquiry, I am aware of the many delicate points which I shall have occasion to touch, and of the many and deep-rooted prejudices with which I have to contend; yet I purpose meeting the subject fairly and openly, and discussing it entirely upon its own merits. From the strongest declaimers against the Church, we often find warm protestations of friendship for it; such persons, assuming no distinctive character, are alike distrusted by all parties. I use no disguise; I consider the Church, as by law established, a great evil to the country, and which, by every Christian effort, the country ought to get rid of. Independently of my sincere conviction of the evils of this system, I can have no natural reasons for opposing it: my parents and relatives were all

church folks, and I the only dissenter. In the way of business I have, no doubt, forfeited the favours of many, and am likely, by protracted opposition, to continue to do so. With me these considerations have no weight; convinced of the anti-christian character of the establishment, and of the sufferings of the people from its oppression; of the prevalency of immorality and irreligion to which it has contributed, and the hopelessness of its ever regaining the esteem of the people, I deem it a serious duty to protest against it with all the force that just reasoning and scriptural argument can afford. Notwithstanding the clamour of "Great is Diana," I know that the country is against her; her fate is decided, and every attempt at reform will but discover so much more of her deformity as to prove that her corruptions are incurable. Some, indeed, admire the system; some submit to it in the absence of a better; many as a matter of fashion, or as a medium of interest and wealth, are numbered with its friends; but few are willing to prove their attachment by any sacrifices for her cause. The only rational course, in attempting to correct the abuses of the church, is to give her entirely into the hands of her own admirers, and to let them change and modify as they think proper. This will be found the safest and the most politic measure for the nation and the government to take. Alive as the people now are to their just rights, jealous of every civil and ecclesiastical encroachment, and entirely divided in their views of religious doctrine and discipline, what religious system could be devised that the nation would approve of, or for whose support the people would consent to be taxed? They abhor the present system, though they submit to it; begin to remodel it, and the late unexpected enthusiasm for the condemnation of borough corruptions, will be equally displayed against the corruptions of the church. A national church, in consistency, belongs to no system but the catholics; for, where free enquiry is permitted, it is impossible to form a system of belief and practice for all parties. If the parliament of England possessed the alleged properties of the Catholic hierarchy, *unity* and *infallibility*, and the people believed it, then a satisfactory religion might be devised; but while, not only the people, but the legislators themselves, are divided, there will be constant jarrings; once

open to change and free discussion, the established forms will be liable to incessant changes, just as parties happen to be dominant. If the church were national, in the same sense as the schools are called national, no person would object; but while it claims a legal "ascendency," and compels support from those who conscientiously disapprove of it, it will continue to be a cause of national discontent. With propriety an honest government might say to the people, "Amongst ourselves there is a great diversity of opinion and practices in religion; some believe in, and admire the Holy Catholic Church; some adhere to the faith and forms of the prayer book; some worship in the meeting-house, and believe the assembly's catechism; and others doubt the correctness of any of these modes; we therefore presume not to interfere with you in these matters. We respect the rights of conscience, and we think it wrong to compel you to support a religion of which you disapprove. While you obey the laws, and are good subjects, you are equally entitled to protection, however diversified your views of religion. Civil power is all that we claim; beyond that our interference is an encroachment upon the prerogative of God, and calculated to do much evil. Choose your own faith, worship in your own way, bear your own burdens, and live in peace with each other. The love of religion itself, the liberal collections for its support, and the zeal of rival parties, are greater assurances of its beneficial extension than any power we possess. Diversified as are our own views, we each believe that the native energy of truth, when possessed of a clear stage, will secure its own triumphs. We see clearly the mischievous tendency of a state religion,—are annoyed constantly with its effects,—we, therefore, cheerfully give up our ecclesiastical trust unto the bishops and clergy, and those who please to adhere to their council. The adherents of the reformed religion, though not more numerous, are much more wealthy than either the Catholics or Dissenters, and, therefore, they cannot complain in having merely to support their own establishment. The tithes and property which once belonged to the Catholics, but which our predecessors have, for the last three centuries, appropriated to the Protestant Church, we again resume, and shall apply them for the good of the nation, in such a manner as the representatives of the people shall direct."

But I object to the national church, not only as impolitic, but as *unscriptural*, and *contrary to the spirit of religion* itself. Christianity can never submit to be promulgated and established in the world by means diametrically opposed to its own injunctions. Until it is corrupted it cannot possibly be made the creature of the state, nor its ascendancy maintained by those means which state influence affords. Religion consists—not in the prostration of the understanding, and the automaton performance of ceremonies, otherwise a government with a power either to bribe or to punish, might diffuse it extensively—but in the free conviction of the mind, the devotion of the heart, and a conduct regulated by genuine principle; and these are properties which neither pope, nor king, nor parliament, nor bishops, nor inquisitions, nor preferment of any sort, can ever produce. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and it is incapable of being regulated by the principles of the world. Government influence, therefore, can never be a legitimate auxiliary; it tends only to corrupt it, to retard its real progress, and to prevent its influence. The legislature may organize something with the same name, clothe it with worldly attractions, provide for it wealth and influence in the state, and fix a stigma upon those who refuse to conform, but it will be destitute of the essence of that pure and spiritual kingdom of which Jesus is the head. But we are often told that these regulations are only the *out-works* of religion, and are merely looked upon as helps for its extension. In answer to this I observe, christianity requires not, admits not, such assistance. It was purest, it flowed most, effected the greatest results, when it was a persecuted cause, and when the powers of civil government were employed for its suppression. In its primitive state it was not known by that ostensibility of character, by its temples made with hands, by its wealth and honors, or by its numerous body of clergy, as it was when Constantine became its protector, (or rather corruptor) and as it has been through all the subsequent ages of its pomp and splendour; but it was infinitely more efficacious; it pervaded the mass of society, it made the heart its seat, and, by the infusion of heavenly principles, it produced a sincerity of obedience, such as the decrees of councils could never effect. I say, therefore, that those who look upon all the pre-

sent paraphernalia of religion as necessary to the furtherance of Christianity, have mistaken its nature; and, however undesignedly, are placing the greatest obstacles in the way of its divine progress. But it is evident, that this argument of outside-work is a mere quibble: our national council not only assumes to be an auxiliary to christianity, but decrees what christianity is, and calls upon the people to receive it upon their definition. Indeed, every thing is made ready, from the thirty-nine articles, which we are to believe, to the very posture and tone of voice in which we are to perform our devotions. It deals not only in plain forms of service, adapted to every station and circumstance of life, and in the common truths of christianity, but even the difficult and mysterious subject of the trinity is presumed to be explained so fully that not to believe it is to incur condemnation. And who are they that presume authoritatively to judge for us in these momentous affairs? Are they the wisest of men, chosen by the people to compound a religion in which all may agree? The answer is obvious. What government can assume to pronounce authoritatively what articles of faith are orthodox, and what the nation ought to believe and practise? Where is there combined in any number of individuals either knowledge, zeal, or purity sufficient for this? Is the nation to be religious by proxy, and the houses of lords and commons to be the sponsors? By a national religion all this, and much more, is assumed; but every sensible man must see the inconsistency of all such pretences.

The fact is, that priests, in all ages, have played upon the credulity of the people. Assuming great pretensions, and claiming a divine commission, they have found no difficulty in shackling the minds of the people, and making their own ascendancy subservient to their sinister designs. They have, therefore, constantly truckled with the state, whilst despotic rulers, conscious of the power of priests, have availed themselves of their assistance for enthralling and oppressing their subjects. "Protect our religion, our tithes and offerings," say the priests, "and we will surrender into your hands, when required, the rights of the unsuspecting people, who have placed themselves in our keeping. Give us a share in the legislature, that our interests may be secure; the king shall be our head,

and, as rulers of 'temporals and spirituals,' we will share with you all the good things which the kingdom can afford." To every discerning man it must be as plain as the sun at noon-day, that the church is regarded by most of the aristocratical families, and by many who minister in its service, not as an institution for diffusing religion and morality among the people, but as an advantageous channel through which to drain the wealth of the country into their own pockets. Such are the abominations connected with religious traffic; and so long have they been tolerated, that respectability is often attached to the names of men who are amassing wealth under the pretence of "curing souls." To receive a portion for doing nothing is harmless compared with the conduct of the man that professes to be a follower of Him who *gave his life* for sinners; and yet, while making gain of godliness, and grasping in all his wealth, he professes to teach others the way to heaven. Those who suffer with Christ, it is said, shall reign with him; but can they, who reap their reward here, expect that crown which the chief shepherd has promised to bestow? With the New Testament in their hands, when will the people read attentively: and, contrasting the purity, simplicity, and good effects of Christ's religion, compared with the expensive, pompous, and sinister systems of the day, declaim boldly against all national religions, with the same spirit that actuated Paul when he exclaimed, "They are no Gods that are *made with hands*!"

These remarks are intended not only to discover the impolicy of the connection of church and state, but to shew that this connection is, of itself, an unnatural alliance. To attempt, therefore, to reform the Church, instead of placing it in a situation where it might admit of salutary changes, by confining it in the trammels of the state, would be a species of bad legislation. A considerable number of people, no doubt, think well of the church, and they are the persons to reform their own system: give the church, therefore, into *their hands*. If the legislature claim the right, and once begin their reforming progress in church matters, depend upon it, they will find themselves in a dilemma such as they have not been in before. A reformed parliament must speak the sense of the people, and the people are *not* for an *exclusive*



Church. What a burlesque upon religion to see Unitarians, Arians, Trinitarians, Presbyterians, Catholics, Churchmen, and probably Deists and Jews, all engaged in mending or making new the religion of the state! By reason of long use the absurdity of parliamentary religion does not strike us, or else, if it were now broached for the first time, I am quite sure there would appear more consistency in parliament undertaking to supply every parish with bread, potatoes, hats, shoes, and physic, than in supplying them with articles of belief and forms of prayer.

But the merit of any system is known best by its effects. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit—this is the surest criterion. Every institution is established to accomplish certain objects; and if, either owing to the defects of its own machinery, or the influence of concurrent circumstances, these objects are not, and cannot be produced, it ought to be discontinued, and the public eased of the expense. Supposing the prison so dilapidated as not capable of securing the prisoners; the dispensary so badly managed as to diffuse sickness instead of health; the fountain of the water establishment so polluted as to cause the inhabitants to nauseate their food; the gas-works to diffuse noxious vapours instead of pure light; would it not be proper—independently of every sympathy for those who were jobbing in these establishments, and the numerous sources of profit to the officers and proprietors arising from the abuses—for the public to rid themselves of these nuisances altogether, or else to place them upon such a footing as to produce the effects for which they were appointed? The application of this to the church is easy. I do not say we will have no church, but I say that the public should give it up; they have been tormented with it long enough. It assumes to be an institution for promoting morality and religion, for preventing crime, and diffusing peace and good-will among mankind. Though there are many excellent men within its pale, and many good things incidentally connected with it, I maintain that the tendency of the system, as a whole, is the reverse of all this. Even the common people in the country, who know nothing of the corruptions in “high places,” or of the labyrinths of ecclesiastical jobbing, are well enlightened into the pernicious workings of this system. Where are the individuals through all the ranks of Bishops, Deans, Prebendaries, Canons, Chancellors,

Commissaries, Proctors, Rectors, Vicars, Curates, &c., who breathe the spirit of the apostles, enter the church merely for the good of others, and labour in spiritual things after their examples, purely in the expectation of a reward in heaven? The church and the function of teaching are in the hands of the rich; and are they the persons from whom religion is to emanate? Only look at the birth, education, connections, and patronage, of the various officers in this establishment, and the objects to which it is made subservient as a political instrument, and without any further enquiry, I should say, that while cause and effect continue, the church cannot diffuse that which its constitution renders it impossible to possess. There is nothing strange in this; corrupt at its beginning, what can be expected as the growth of thirteen centuries? It was first introduced into this country under the direction of the pope, was modelled, in a great measure, to suit the customs of the inhabitants, and continued until the time of the reformation, under the councils of the Catholic hierarchy. It degenerated with the age, like its kindred establishments in other nations. Though at this period a partial change of constitution, a change of forms, and a change of belief took place, the principles of avarice and ambition were retained; and, finding ample scope to revel in the confiscated property of the Catholic spoils, they have combined ever since to cast a blasting influence upon the otherwise good effects of this important event. Religion was still made the stalking horse to secular interests, and every subsequent regulation has proceeded upon its obligation to do so. I blush for the audacity of church-men when I hear them reviling the catholic priesthood, and praising their own clergy as the most respectable and useful order of men,—calling the papal power “antichrist,” and their own church “pure and apostolical”—denying the authority of the pope, and professing to regard “the bible as the only rule of faith and practice!” Was ever error so glaring as in the assumption that the system of our reformed religion and the system of the New Testament are the same? Where are the points of resemblance? or where are the glorious effects of the one which were produced by the other?

Having stated my disapprobation of all religious establishments managed by the state, I now proceed to mention more particularly some of the objectionable features in the national Church of this country, and which, I think, will fully



prove that the corruptions of the church are contributory to the irreligion and immorality of the age.

If a nation is to be taught effectually the important lessons of religion, *the best and most appropriate agency* ought to be selected. What rank of society are the agents to be selected from? what are the suitable qualifications? and by whom are they to be chosen? are questions of the first importance. Let them be fairly answered, and they will develop a great source of church corruption. The church belongs to government, and the titled and the rich are incorporated with, or are receiving favours from the government; the office of teaching religion is made a lucrative one, and the relations and dependants of the rich are generally preferred. Here is the root of all the evil; it is that very thing called money, for which almost every religious party is constantly panting, that leads to the appointment of an agency, every way unsuited to the object. Can any thing be more at variance with the plain examples of Christ and his apostles, than the appointment of gentlemen's sons, of college-educated boys, to be instruments of converting the world from sin to God? A peeress is just as likely to manage the concerns of a weaver's family, as many of these to teach and diffuse the spiritual, the self-denying religion of Jesus. This corrupt patronage is the hot-bed of hypocrisy; teachers of divinity must, of course, be *divine* themselves; and hence, with hearts as hard as adamant, they enter the office of curing souls, and profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost. Through their whole official career, they are obliged to affect a solemn air, and assume a religious earnestness, to which, in reality, they are entire strangers. I could give numerous instances illustrative of this. Their high birth and their college education may fit them for associating with the families of the rich, or acting as chaplains to the nobility, but not for encountering all the dangers and sufferings attendant upon a constant course of going about doing good. The canonical duties of a clergyman consist principally in reading over the ritual services, and no great degree of either moral or mental attainment is requisite for this. Efforts certainly are made, both by clergymen and laymen of the church, to teach the people on a more scriptural plan; and, in some instances, the good effects are visible; but this is a departure from the orthodox practice; is stigmatized as Methodism; and is often restrained, or put down by church power.

As to the *settlement* of a person as teacher in any place, the principle of *utility* is not consulted. It is not ascertained whether he is likely to be useful to the people, or whether they are likely to be suited with him. No, no; my Lord John has a relation waiting for preferment; a living being vacant, the patron sends him, not for the benefit of the people, but because the *living* is suitable to the dignity of the clergyman. If his son happen to be trained for the church, and no favour be likely to fall out, the good father *purchases* the next presentation of some suitable vicarage, and makes his darling son a priest. Ill or well qualified, satisfied or not satisfied, he comes among them, claims to be their spiritual leader, and compels them to pay tithes and offerings. Once settled, however objectionable his teaching, however offensive his conduct, it is next to impossible for any thing but death to remove him. What would be the consequence, if a neighbouring gentleman were to send his son to some of our large manufacturing concerns, insisting upon his admission, demanding his salary, and, contrary to the wishes of the proprietors, declaring that he would not allow them to discharge him! Our cotton lords would soon wage war, and very justly, against such a species of despotism. And it is really astonishing that the people, who have contended so long for the right of electing their own representatives, should suffer every parish in England to be a spiritually corrupt *nomination borough*.

In a religious institution, the *conduct* of every official person is of the first importance. They are commanded to be "examples to the flock;" and Paul, referring to his own and his fellow-labourers' conduct, observes, "Ye are witness, and God also, how *holily, justly, and unblamably* we behaved ourselves among you; we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear to us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for, labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." (1 Thess. II. 7—10.) Here is a noble example, and well worthy the cause in which it was exhibited; but do we find, or can we expect, under the present system, such disinterested appeals to conduct? No. Young men are selected for the church, not on account of any superior piety or spiritual gifts, but for the sake of a *living*,

and hence the conduct of many of them is a disgrace to society. Provided the bells ring at the time, and service get celebrated according to the forms of the prayer book, churchmen do not seem very particular as to the conduct of *any* of their officers. From the churchwarden down to the sexton, I have known numbers of drunken and immoral characters, fully recognized as efficient servants of the church. In country places, this is so common as to excite no surprise. Well may religion degenerate into mere forms, under the withering influence of idle parsons, drunken clerks, and reprobate sextons. Being one of a new set of ringers when a youth, I had many opportunities of observing the conduct of those connected with the church service. Nothing was more common than for many of the ringers, singers, the clerk, and sexton, after contributing their quota to the glory of God, to offer, in the evening, a willing sacrifice at the shrine of Bacchus. Such scenes were disgusting to a reflecting mind; but, though they were known to the whole parish, no person thought it his duty to complain. Those who "minister in holy things" should be *holy* themselves, but it is evident that if there be a fitness for the performance of the external duty, this qualification is regarded as a non-essential. If evidence were wanting, if more were necessary for my argument, I could point, just now, to numerous places where the conduct of the various officers is a disgrace to society, religion out of the question. I think the substitution of organs for singers is a good device; for, while they answer the same end, they have the merit of corrupting none by their bad example: would that many parsons and clerks could be supplanted in the same way! Can that Church be deserving our sanction or support which permits vice and profanity to revel in her courts, and actually makes her services, for such, into a city of refuge? Need I press this point by observing that, as example is more powerful than any preceptive instruction, the conduct of the officers of the church is among the most powerful means for diffusing vice and immorality? Persons without principle, lax in morals, find here a justification, and are encouraged to proceed in their wickedness, because the parson does the same. The debasement of country people is often owing to this. Indeed, so rare are useful, active, pious men in country churches, that where they are met with, they are almost adored.

Owing to the rank, education, and habits of the church mi-

nisters, and the influence of belonging to an "ascendency" establishment, it is observable, that they often exhibit a reserved, forbidding, austere disposition. They carry with them an air of authority which ill becomes the humble teachers of the meek and lowly Jesus. Called by reverend names, clothed with peculiar attire, bowed to by the laity, they seem to have very dignified ideas of their office; and, deceived by the flattery of the rich, and by the civil authorities, they are, perhaps, but little aware of the tendency of their demeanour upon the lower classes. On all public occasions they seem to expect, and actually receive, precedence of dissenting ministers. This is all inconsistent with religion, and prevents their freedom of access among the people. One is our master, even Christ, and all, both teachers and taught, in his kingdom, are brethren. But this equality can never exist where there are different orders of the clergy, and where their ambition is excited by wealth, and so many marks of worldly honour.

But the *expence*, and the *manner in which it is raised*, is the most appalling part of my subject. Ministers of religion, with few exceptions, are expensive articles, and the ascendency they sometimes gain over the minds of others, gives them peculiar advantage for gaining their ends. But where the cost is the effect of mutual agreement, no third party has any ground of complaint. Where there is no compulsion, if persons overrate the value of another's services, they do so at their own expence. But the case is vastly different in our national church. Ministers are not only forced upon the people, but the people are obliged to maintain them, without even a single reserve as to the amount.\* "Go," says the Earl to his grandson, "take possession of yonder pulpit, read over for the people, twice every sunday, the services appointed, and claim, for this laborious succession of duties, the tenth part of those flowing forrests of corn, which will gladden thy heart. Secure thy rights, and give the people all the merit of paying tithes and offerings. If another living should fall out, thou wilt be competent for that also; thou canst oversee the growth of the corn, and as for the 'curing of souls,' (as the cant term is) poor M—— who is out of a job, will do it for £70 a year." Money, actually, is every thing in the church; there is

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\* For a few particulars as to the incomes of the clergy, and the expense of the national church, see the statements in this number, under the head "SELECTIONS."

nothing to be had without it, and it is demanded and paid with as much formality as in any mercantile transaction. No trust, no deductions, no exceptions in favour of poverty; the clergy will have their fees down on the nail, and to the last penny. It has been said that the passion for money is always strongest nearest the altar; and no wonder that while the clergy are thus serving themselves and fleecing the flock, the people should be left as sheep without a shepherd, to follow the wicked desires of their own hearts. The working clergy (as they are, not very appropriately, termed) are by no means an exception. Their case proves nothing, but that the eagles are so numerous, that the carcass is not sufficiently large to allow every one to gorge himself as he could wish. So voracious are those who get the preference that the last comers are sure to have bare picking. But is this a matter of choice? Are they not all looking up? Does not the man of £50, enjoy his £500, as comfortably as any one, if he is fortunate enough to get preferred? Do we hear of any preferring a *small* to a *larger* living? or do we find any who can adopt the language of Paul:—"These hands have ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me;"—"I laboured night and day that I might not be chargeable unto any of you?" They are introduced to the ministry for the sake of its gains, and, as in reference to the Bar and the Stage, every one seems to keep the goal of preferment constantly in view. In this, as in many other respects, primitive christianity can never coalesce with a national religion. Thank God! none of these secular systems were known or acted upon by the first christians; otherwise the infidel would now gain, in argument, a complete triumph. Many of the working clergy are certainly objects of pity, not merely because they are only receiving £50 or £60 a year, but because their parents or friends had not prudence to put them to some honourable employment, for which nature had fitted them, and where they would have been under no necessity of doing violence to their own feelings, or being dependent upon others. This system is not only a source of corruption and taxation, but of cruelty also. A lad trained to be a parson is scarcely fit for any thing else; he cannot dig; he knows nothing of the world; he has no enterprize; and if he should be unsuccessful in divinity, what is he to do? He is expected to appear respectable, and to move in the higher circles, but he has no income to maintain it; he must, therefore, either be

a burden to his friends, or sink under accumulated difficulties. Many dissenting ministers are in the same dilemma; those of inferior abilities, and those who are grown too old to please a fastidious congregation, are often cast aside, and have to pine away their days in wretchedness. Numbers of the clergy, by the love of money, have stopped their own mouths; the people will not hear them; "they care nothing for us, money is all they want," is the common observation among the working people. Under these circumstances, can we be surprised at the prevalence of vice and the want of religion?

How are all the immense revenues of the clergy raised? Are the clergy so highly esteemed for their work's sake, that the people are led to contribute voluntarily for their support? Upon this principle were the first christian ministers maintained when they had occasion to depend upon others; but it is not so now. If the affections of the people were the source, some few ministers would be as well supported as at present, but by far the greater part, would be turned adrift. They rest not their claims upon their services, but eat the bread of idleness, which they *compel* others to supply without any equivalent. Corn tithes, small tithes, offerings, and dues, and various other demands are made by the clergy, and the people of this country are permitted to be robbed in the most audacious manner under the garb of religion. Religion! Let not her sacred name be found associated with proceedings so gross and offensive as those of the clergy! What a wretched system must that be that allows an idle rector to enter every farmer's corn field and take away, against his consent, and without any equivalent, every tenth sheaf!—that allows the spiritual pirate to enter the meadow, potatoe-field, and orchard; to inspect the shippon, pigsty, hen-roost, and the bee-hive, to seize an unhallowed tithe—that allows parish after parish to be convulsed by protracted lawsuits to recover claims of which the present generation never heard before—that allows every peaceable inhabitant in large towns to be insulted at his own door by the beggarly demands of pence and half-pence by the agents of these monks of the reformation—that actually promulgates war and dissention, envy and hatred, among those who should be bound in the bonds of peace! To-day in the pulpit, with his pious people, praying against envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness; to-morrow, menacing the farmers for more tithes; or, if in a town, sending out



summonses by hundreds, to frighten the poor in his parish, to part with the last penny they have in the world! Did ever heaven witness such impositions before; or was ever nation so plundered and insulted, by priests, as this has been? Talk of these men as teachers of the people! the people hate them; and though the country people are obliged to cringe to them as known despots, yet, in their hearts, they cultivate towards them a deadly hostility. The prayer of the oxen, sheep, pigs, geese, ducks, hens, and bees, is—"from these rapacious men good Lord deliver us!" Of the oppressions of this church there is no end; driven from the church by the conduct of the clergy, the people have been additionally taxed for becoming dissenters: new churches have been built out of the public money, and thus additional heavy burdens have been laid upon the parishes. Among the long list of taxes, we have now "Church Taxes" to pay. These are managed by the church-wardens, with about as much honour, and satisfaction to the people, as all other church matters are managed. The cursing and swearing, and blackguardism, occasioned by these demands, are equal to any thing which has yet appeared in the Reformer. With this very imperfect sketch of church and clerical avarice and impositions before us, do I need to say more under this head to prove that this establishment has contributed largely to the present depraved state of morals?

But I shall not discharge my duty in examining the merit of the national church as a promoter of religion, if I do not advert to the *services* she has established for this purpose. Taking in charge the spiritual and eternal welfare of twenty millions of souls, what has she done to accomplish this? Has she pondered over the footsteps of Him in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Has she marked the proceedings of the apostles under the guidance of the Spirit, and selected the means by which the word of God, at first, prevailed so mightily? No. Content with the appointment of forms and ceremonies; preferring the religion of times and places, the most she has done is to establish a splendid ritual service. All that she has provided is deeply tinged with the pomps and vanities of the world, and calculated to lead to formality at the expense of real piety. Her religion is nearly all confined to consecrated ground, and seeks no in-

tercourse with all the outcast parts of society, where the bishop's blessing has never been pronounced. Buildings are erected, but what are they like? Look at them, inside and out; ascertain the expense, and let reason say if these are parts of the christian religion. Instead of gorgeous temples made with hands, adorned with all the superstitious foppery of by-gone ages, the proper way to diffuse religion is *to go to the people*, and instead of a cold adherence to form of worship, to teach them divine knowledge, inward piety, and practical goodness. In addressing another, to enlighten his mind and impress his heart, or in presenting the prayers and thanksgivings of his brethren before the throne of grace, what sincere christian would think of clothing himself in fantastic apparel? Contrary to all our ideas of simplicity, unaffectedness, and the solemnity of such services, the church has ordained that all her ministers shall be clothed in sacerdotal attire, and has appointed certain shapes and colours of garments to certain parts of the service. Those who have always sat in the same seat scarcely notice these matters; but to the man who reflects upon every thing he beholds, and who contends for consistency in religion, the *white* gown for prayers, and the *black* one for sermons, accompanied with various marks of literary honors, and the lawn sleeves for his reverence the bishop, are really more than he can away with. He sees in all these the spirit of priestcraft, and a violation of that simplicity which characterized the religion of Christ.

I know that to endeavour to detract from the fame of the celebrated and long established service taught in the liturgy, will be considered a sacrilege of the most heinous kind. But, whilst I have no wish to give any unnecessary disturbance to the prejudices of others, I cannot omit briefly remarking upon the ritual services of the church, for to these also I attribute the want of more inward piety among the people, the surest source of good morals.

If the people are to be instructed, one would think that the church would, at least, adopt the plainest mode of instruction. The construction of this sermon is left to the minister's discretion; of the originality, the fervour, and the appropriateness of these discourses, little can be said; yet, after all, this is the most instructive part of the service. The

scriptures are read, it is true, but how? The parts are cut from their connections, and mangled into short lessons, and these are sent forth without a single illustrative observation. The reading of the psalms, which, if well managed, would be very edifying, is deprived of its utility by the school-boy method of reading alternate verses by the parson and clerk. Some ministers read very correctly; and, after a verse read in a clear, impressive manner, how mortifying it is to hear the next verse read in a voice twice as loud, and with the droning, singing tone, peculiar to the lower desk. Perhaps some men may please themselves with attending to such a mode of instruction and worship, but, if reason and common sense alone were consulted, these incongruities would never be continued. Some persons profess to be much enamoured of the prayers, but I am sure, if they were revised, many useful alterations might be made. The constant use of the same words is analogous to no mode of petitioning with which we are acquainted, and evidently tends to reduce the mind to a cold formality. By many, the service is attended to as a sort of incantation, more than as one calculated to act upon the feelings through the medium of the judgment. The most absurd part of the devotional exercises is in the minister and clerk reading audibly different parts at the same time. It may be a corruption of an useful practice, but, in its present shape, no sensible man can approve of a custom which is confusion itself. To print the same sentences twice on the same page, and on the same lines, the second impression being a few words behind the first, would give some idea of the confusion of this practice. But custom can sanction any thing. On these points, I know that so deeply rooted are the prejudices of some, that it is vain to reason with them. In the church every thing seems disposed to degenerate into formality. As for hireling ministers, they never care how little they do, or how soon they get it over. The manner in which they frequently repeat the service at baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and sometimes morning and evening prayer, shews that beyond the repetition of the words, they feel little concerned for their beneficial effects upon others. Absorbed in forms made ready to their hands, mental cultivation, the enlargement of the understanding, and the excitement of good feelings, seem to

be no part of the established system. This mischievous formality follows the people into all their private and domestic devotion; content with a form of words at church, the same mode of worship is made to serve in private and in the family. Where the heart never bursts forth in its own language, we shall find no great attainment in practical religion, nor efforts to extend it among others.

There are many things enjoined in the canons and the prayer-book which, owing to their unsuitableness to the spirit of the age, are discontinued in practice. One hundred and fifty days in each year are appointed to be kept as feasts, vigils, fasts, &c., but they are generally disregarded, and so are many other things enforced by the same authority. It is clear that the care of the poor belongs to the church; the minister is chairman of the vestries, and the churchwardens are regularly connected with the overseers, but where do we find any attention paid to these important duties? The fact is, that every thing that yields profit to the parson is attended to,—every thing in which he has no interest grows into disuse.

Had my limits permitted I purposed to make a few remarks on the nature and tendency of the ceremonies of baptism and confirmation, the services adopted at marriages and funerals, and the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's supper; but to treat upon them at any length would exceed the limits of this essay. These all sprang from the Catholic church, and, unless viewed in connection with their peculiar tenets, seem pregnant with absurdity. Does any Protestant seriously believe that children are regenerated in baptism; made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven? To compel sponsors to personify the child, and to make vows and promises in its stead, which are never fulfilled, is such an act of solemn mockery as ought to make the parties tremble. What is a christening but a season of drinking and revelry? How often do these pliant saints give as a reason of their illness on a Monday, that they were at a christening last night? The farce being over, though the god-parents make three of the most important promises, they pay little or no attention to the spiritual instruction of the child; and as to fulfilling their promises, that is impossible. As if it were designed, a church and a public-house gene-

rally stand together, and parties at christenings, and also at funerals, go from one to be entertained at the other; and in some country places, the minister is invited, to give a zest to the enjoyments. The new-born infant is unconscious of what is done at its baptism, and is, therefore, not deceived; but at the ceremony of confirmation—so solemn as only to be performed by a bishop—in teaching the thoughtless thousands of young persons that they are *regenerated*, and that *all their sins are forgiven*, the church is chargeable with propagating an awful deception. Let any thinking man observe the conduct of these youths, both before and after their confirmation, and they will be satisfied of this. If ever the friends of the church should determine to reform it, so as to make it an instrument for promoting real piety, they must abolish a great number of unmeaning and pernicious ceremonies, and direct the labour of their ministers to such matters of real utility as will show, by their effects upon society, that they are approved of God.

The time of church ministers being so much occupied in ritual services, no wonder that we find a constant omission of what the scriptures lead us to expect from a christian minister; and hence it is not only in the infusion of evil, but in the *withholding of good*, that we mark the church as an imperfect establishment for the promoting of religion. The effects of so great a pertinacity for church and chapel religion, so great an anxiety for ministering at the altar, must lead to the neglect of the people at large. Go where you will, and at whatever time you please, and you meet with the most deplorable proofs of wickedness, and exhibitions of sin, but seldom, if ever, can you meet with these heralds of salvation, calling sinners to repentance. A most serious charge, therefore, stands against the church, for suffering the encroachments of vice without applying *suitable* means for its prevention. Pass through the town, or perambulate the streets by night or by day, filthy, disgusting, and profane scenes are exhibited, and you will perceive vice taking deep root, and luxuriantly shooting forth without let or hinderance. It would appear, sometimes, as if all the soldiers of the cross were fled, that the officers had retreated through fear, and that the enemy was in the undisturbed possession of the field.

I am glad to find that public writers now so often notice the vices of society, and especially the prevalence of juvenile depravity; but I am sorry to perceive, from their suggestions, an imperfect acquaintance with the cause. Fresh plans for forming societies, and establishing institutions to counteract the alarming spread of vice, and to correct every branch of crime, are mooted every week. This is the age of "societies;" the last twenty years have been rich in their production, but, so far as morals are concerned, we are not a wit better. What does every new institution intended to prevent crime, and to promote virtue, say, but—"this is the work of the clergy; they have left it undone, and, though we pay them liberally, we have to do it ourselves?" In the poverty and rags of a family, whose means are amply sufficient, I read their idleness and neglect of duty; so, in the demoralization of the people, I trace the same conduct in reference to the clergy. I beg the attention of every philanthropist to this particular, for I believe on this very point the public are sadly mistaken, and have, in consequence, committed the greatest mistakes. They have appointed persons to teach religion to the world, and furnished them with all the aid which was necessary; and now, having proved their incompetency, why do the public connive at the imposition; and, suffering the clergy still to retain their appointments, try to do their work by other means? But what must be done? We seem to be in an awful condition; everywhere vice appears unrestrained, and, facilitated by our large manufacturing establishments, without any proper corrective power. The prospects of the country are gloomy; the clergy, assuming to be what they really are not, have prevented others, properly qualified, from entering the field. The country has been actuated by a blind confidence, and has not liked to intrude upon what was considered the proper sphere of the clergy. I therefore say, once for all, that if we look to the national clergy, or even the popular ministers among the Dissenters, to reform the country, we shall be disappointed; and that "a new set" of ministers is indispensable. These must be men of God, not of the world; inspired by the love of Jesus, not by filthy lucre; who, instead of courting the friendship of the world, must aim, like Paul, to turn it "upside down." Such are not in the church; such the church will never sanction.



Thus, though the church has not failed to perpetuate superstition and formality—to afford a disguise to the profligacy of the rich—to strengthen the hands of despotism—to gratify the covetous and ambitious wishes of priests—to afford endless opportunities of jobbing—to assist in impoverishing the people—to sow strife and discord in parishes—to connive at sin, revel in corruption, and oppose every liberal attempt at improvement—as an institution for diffusing morality and religion, taken altogether, *it has no claims* upon the public; and justice demands, at least, at the hands of an enlightened people, its immediate renovation.

J. L.

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### VARIETIES.

**Public Works.**—On the evening of July 25th the Chancellor of the Exchequer obtained a grant of one million for the purpose of carrying on public works of utility, which would give employment to the unemployed poor. Money could not be granted for a more laudable purpose; but then it is an important question how this money is to be expended. Two things should be kept in view, a *constant creation of labour*, and a *profitable return*. Money spent on public buildings flatters the vanity of the nation—more concerned for external pomp than the happiness of the people—but it is generally not only unproductive, but brings with it additional burdens, and creates little or no demand for labour. But let a million of money be spent in inclosing, draining, and cultivating land, and this will yield *perpetual sources of employment*. In the application of our surplus capital, we should imitate our industrious farmers; instead of spending their means on ornamental matters, every penny is cast upon the land, with a view of its future return of profit. If, for instance, the *forty thousand pounds* expended on Blackburn Church, had been spent in cultivating and improving the vast tracks of land which lie on every side in a neglected state, what a difference in the result. Instead of a heap of stones, entailing an annual burden upon an impoverished people, there might have been a great accession of corn fields, meadows, orchards, and gardens, yielding every year a return of profit and labour. The same remark will apply to every part of this country. If individuals expended their money with no more discretion than the late governments have done, their neighbours would pronounce them fit only for Bedlam. On the one hand, there is redund-

ant labour; on the other, unemployed capital: why not bring them together? If individuals are too sordid, or too timid to do this, let the government do it, and employ suitable persons in each county to carry it into effect. It is employment, not charity, that the poor want. The land is nature's provision—other sources of employment are artificial—and happy would it be for many distressed families, if, by a removal of the intolerable burdens the land is doomed to bear, and the revision of the laws by which its price is enhanced, they could again return to a rural life, from a state of poverty and misery, in the midst of a dense and over-grown manufacturing population.

*Clerical Impositions.*—These grow insensibly: introduced under some plausible pretext, and but feebly opposed by those who object to them, they soon become law, and of permanent obligation. We have an illustration of this in the charge of an extra 1s. 1d. for every funeral at the new churches in this town. This was opposed at first, but the claim is still persisted in, and as it is made at a time when the parties are in trouble for the loss of their friends, rather than contend with the clergyman, they pay it; and if church dues continue upon their present principle (which heaven prevent) this claim will soon be admitted as just and valid. The fact is, that this thirteen-pence, claimed by the vicar, for *doing nothing*, is a downright robbery. He claims it because, if the corpse were interred in the yard of the parish church, he and his clerk would get the job, of which they are now deprived by the interment taking place in the yards of the *new churches*. This shews, full well, the disposition of parsons, and their notions of the principle of justice. Upon this principle, if, by the influence of two new competitors, I should be obliged to sell cheese for a farthing a pound less profit than I got before, I must come upon some defenceless persons to make up the deficiency. I hope a stand will be made against this imposition.

*Blue-School.*—I have been waiting several months to see if the Vicar would re-consider his conduct in reference to the Blue-School, before I adverted to the matter in public. He is the exclusive trustee (and a most unfortunate circumstance it is that clergymen should be made trustees for so many charitable endowments) and, however he may have discharged his duty with satisfaction to himself, no other person can feel satisfied. Though there must be hundreds of applications, the school is, and has been for a long time, almost without children. Those who have noticed them as they go to the parish church, know that for a long time their number was but seven or eight, and that at present it does not exceed ten or eleven. There is a commodious school-room, and a master with a regular salary, but next to no scholars. If, as has been hinted, the income is not sufficient to clothe the full number of boys, instead of making a mockery of the thing, let the state of the school and its funds be laid before the public, and the trifle wanted for this purpose would easily be raised. It would be better to give a competent

number education, if they had no clothing, than to maintain all the expenses of the establishment for doing comparatively nothing.

*Easter-Dues.*—The bell continues to tinkle, but with a different tone; the chest for holy offerings is removed from the vestry to the town-hall; and though "Easter" is past and gone, "dues" are still in season. Unwilling to bring their "offerings" according to "ancient custom," a great number of individuals are summoned before his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for having "subtracted and refused to pay the small tithes, offering, oblations, and obventions (!) *justly grown due* (mark these words) in the borough and parish of Preston, to the said ROGER CARUS WILSON, according to the rights, customs, and prescriptions, commonly used within the said borough, to the value of *one shilling and one penny!*" We often meet with an ugly word called "costs," and here we have a fair specimen. This moderate demand of the Vicar's is attended, in the first process, with a tax of about *one hundred and fifty per cent.* Thus the Justice, though not the first in the firm, gets a full share of the profits. A time will come, and I hope it is not far distant, when these things will appear too ridiculous even to laugh at. It is now many years since I paid any Easter-Dues, and I think it is a glaring instance of oppression to the poor, to summon them and to pass me over. If they are to suffer I should like to suffer with them.

*Rearings.*—The rearing of houses, like the *footings* of apprentices and new workmen, is nearly always attended with a "spell" of drunkenness. It was well remarked by an individual, that instead of real gratitude, the workmen actually meet to give thanks to the Devil for the completion of their work! If the builder of a house wish to entertain his workmen,—well; but if, instead of taking them to a public-house to get drunk, he would provide them a supper at his own house, and entertain them in a rational manner, he would find it would contribute both to his own and to their interest. Once introduced to a public-house, and inebriated with intoxicating liquor, workmen sacrifice several days to this ill-judged custom. The flag remains upon the building, and, in some cases, may be fitly denominated a signal of distress!

*Writing on the Walls.*—The eyes of our youth should be carefully guarded from every thing that would contaminate the mind. Hence the necessity of defacing from the walls those wanton and obscene scrawls which we often notice. Rising the brow beyond Swill-Brook, on the foot road, are a number of these. In the centre of the populous town of Liverpool, adjoining Castle-street, I noticed, the other day, the following, in large characters:—"Sandon for ever; damn the Unitarians." The magistrates ought to give orders for the defacing of these outrages on decency.

*Infidelity.*—The Archbishops and Bishops, in convocation,

complain bitterly, in their address to the King, of the growth of infidelity. If there be an increase of open and avowed infidelity, these dignitaries should be anxious to ascertain *whence it arises*; for, in that case, they might discover that their own conduct is a fruitful source of this evil. The gorgeous pageant exhibited on the occasion referred to, by persons professing to be the successors of the fishermen of Galilee, is, of itself, enough to shake the faith of some. I am sure, if I had never learnt more of the christian religion, than what I have seen in the popular systems, I should have rejected it as unworthy the name and character to which it aspires. But the fact is, it is the infidelity of the *heart*, or a total indifference to the threatenings, promises, and precepts of Jehovah, and to the declarations of a future state, which is now so widely spreading, and for which we ought to feel alarmed.

*The Coronation.*—In endeavouring to bring into display the feelings of the people on any public occasion, the great danger is of encouraging various excesses, and bursting the bounds of moderation. The coronation is an occasion of this description. Nothing is more proper than to encourage loyal feeling, and a proper display of it, at a time like this, is very desirable; but unless it be guarded with the hand of reason, and superintended by those who care for the morals of the people, the most shameful profligacy of manners will be encouraged. Can God be pleased with that kind of rejoicing, which consists in revelry and beastly intoxication? In some places, the people, imitating an old, barbarous custom, are intending to roast whole oxen, accompanied with barrels of ale. This is often attended with a brutality which is a disgrace to civilized society. How much more good might be done, if persons of character and influence would engage to superintend the proceedings, and to regulate them according to the principles of good order and decorum.

*Bathing.*—At this season, the temptation to watering-places is very strong, and those which are deemed respectable, are crowded with visitors. But there is a numerous class of persons who cannot spare time or money to make a regular visit, for any length of time. These content themselves with a day's excursion to such secondary places as Lea-Marsh. Here, I am told, the greatest indecencies are practised; and that, unrestrained either by principle, custom, or authority, the scenes exhibited are just what might be expected from savage nations. We may write and declaim against vice till doomsday, if we merely depend upon the present magistrates and parsons to prevent it, or put it down.

*Wreck of the Rothsay Castle.*—The melancholy event of the wreck of this steamer, by which about a hundred persons have lost their lives, is another proof of the effects of drinking. War and pestilence have slain their thousands, but strong drink its ten times tens of thousands.

J. L.

## SELECTIONS.

*Number, Offices, and Revenues of the Clergy.*—The following are from the "Black Book," recently published, which contains a fund of valuable information. The statements are the result of laborious calculation.

"We shall now collect the different items and exhibit a general statement of the revenue of the Established Clergy. The sum put down for tithe is church-tithe only, after deducting the tithe of lay-impropriations, and allowing for abbey-land, and land exempt by modus from tithe. The church-rates are a heavy burden on the people; but, being levied at uncertain intervals, for the repair of churches and chapels, they do not form a part of the personal income of the clergy, and are omitted.

*Revenues of the Established Clergy of England and Wales.*

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Church-tithe.....  | £6,884,800        |
| Incomes of the bishoprics .....  | 297,115           |
| Estates of the deans and chapters.....   | 494,090           |
| Glebes and parsonage-houses.....   | 250,000           |
| Perpetual curacies, 75 <i>l.</i> each.....   | 75,000            |
| Benefices not parochial, 250 <i>l.</i> each .....  | 32,450            |
| Church-fees on burials, marriages, christenings, &c. ....                                | 500,000           |
| Oblations, Offerings, and compositions for offerings at the<br>four great festivals..... | 80,000            |
| College and school foundations .....   | 692,150           |
| Lectureships in towns and populous places .....  | 60,000            |
| Chaplainships and offices in public institutions.....                                    | 10,000            |
| New churches and chapels .....   | 94,050            |
| <b>Total Revenues of the Established Clergy.....</b>                                     | <b>£9,459,565</b> |

"We are confident several of these sources of emolument are rather underrated. Perhaps it may be alleged that some items do not properly appertain to ecclesiastical income—that they are the rewards *pro opera et labore* extra-officially discharged by the clergy. But what would be said if, in stating the emoluments of the Duke of Wellington or Sir George Murray, we limited ourselves to their military pay, without also including their civil appointments? The sums placed to the account of the clergy are received by them either as ministers of religion, or from holding situations to which they have been promoted in consequence of being members of the Established Church.

There are several sums annually raised on the people which we have omitted, but which, in strictness, ought to be placed to the account of the Clergy. Large sums are constantly being voted by Parliament for building churches in Scotland, as well as in England; more than 21,000*l.* has been granted for building churches and bishops' palaces in the West Indies; 1,600,000*l.* has been granted for the aid of the *poor clergy*, as they are called, and who have been also favoured by their livings being exonerated from the land-tax; nearly a million has been granted for building houses and purchasing glebes for the clergy in Ireland; upwards of 16,000*l.* a-year is voted to a society for propagating Church of Englandism in foreign parts; and more than 9,000*l.* is granted to some other Societies for *Discountenancing Vice*,—a duty which one would think especially merged in the functions of our paid pastors. All these sums have been omitted; they certainly tend to augment the burden imposed on the public by the church: but as it is to be hoped they do not all form permanent branches of ecclesiastical charge, they are excluded from our estimate of church income."

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"The real situation of the parochial clergy is this; in England and Wales there are 5098 rectories, 3687 vicarages, and 2970 churches neither rectorial nor vicarial; in all, 11,755 churches. These churches are contained in 10,674 parishes and parochial chapelries; and, probably, after a due allowance for the consolidation of some of the smaller parishes, form about as many parochial benefices. Now, the whole of these 10,674 benefices are in the hands of 7191 incumbents; there are 2886 individuals with 7037 livings; 567 with 1701 livings; 209 with 836 livings; 64 with 320 livings. Let any one look into the *Eccelesiastical Directory*, and he will find nearly one half of the whole number of incumbents are pluralists. Some are rectors at one place, vicars at another, and curates at another; some hold three or four rectories, besides vicarages and chapelries; some hold two vicarages, a chapelry and a rectory; in short they are held in every possible combination. But what does the secretary to four bishops, Mr. Wright, the "*Informer*," as BRAGGE BATHURST termed him, say on this subject; in one diocese the majority of the clergy had three livings, some five, and some six, besides dignities, and "yet a great part of them did not reside upon any of their preferments."

"This is exactly the way in which the property of the church is monopolized. Some persons imagine that there are as many rectors as rectories, vicars as vicarages, prebendaries as prebends, deans as deaneries, &c. No such thing: the 26 bishops, 700 dignitaries, and about 4000 non-resident incumbents, principally belonging to the Aristocracy, enjoy nearly the whole ecclesiastical revenues, amounting to more than NINE MILLIONS, and averaging upwards of 2000*l.* a-year each.

"And for what service? what duties do they perform? what benefit do the people derive from their labours? The bishops ordain the priests; sometimes visit their dioceses; sometimes preach; and this we believe is



the extent of their performances, and which, in our opinion, amounts to very little. As to the venerable, very reverend, and worshipful dignitaries, they perform still less. Let any one visit the cathedral or collegiate churches; go into St. Pauls, Westminster Abbey, or York Minster, for instance; and observe what is doing in these places. No service is performed which interests the public. Persons may be found admiring the stone and mortar; but the vicars-choral, the priest-vicars, the chanters, or sub-chanters, or fifth or sixth canons, are very little regarded: and as to the dignitaries themselves, why they are never to be seen; many of them probably reside some hundred miles off, in more pleasant parts of the country, enjoying the amusements of the chase, or whiling away their time at card-tables or watering-places. Then, as to the non-resident incumbents, it must be admitted they are sinecurists, whose duty is performed, and for which they receive the salary, by deputy. Thus, it appears, that these three classes, without performing any duties of importance, absorb almost the entire revenue of the church "

" Statement, shewing the Mode in which the Revenues of the Church, amounting to £9,459,565, are divided amongst the different orders of the Clergy.

| Class.                |  | Average income<br>of each individual. | Total<br>income. |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| EPISCOPAL<br>CLERGY.  | 2 Archbishops .....  | £26,465                               | £52,930          |
|                       | 24 Bishops .....   | 10,174                                | 244,185          |
|                       | 28 Deans .....   | 1580                                  | 44,250           |
|                       | 61 Archdeacons .....   | 739                                   | 45,196           |
|                       | 26 Chancellors .....   | 494                                   | 12,844           |
| DIGNITA-<br>RIES, &c. | 514 Prebendaries and Canons .....  | 545                                   | 280,130          |
|                       | 330 Precentors, Succentors, Vicars-<br>General, Minor Canons, Priest-<br>Vicars, Vicars-Choral, and other<br>Members of Cathedral and Col-<br>legiate Churches .....   | 338                                   | 111,650          |
|                       | 2886 Aristocratic Pluralists, mostly non-<br>resident, and holding two, three,<br>four, or more livings, in all 7037<br>livings, averaging each, tithes,<br>glebes, church-fees, &c., 764l...                | 1863                                  | 5,379,430        |
| PAROCHIAL<br>CLERGY.  | 4305 Incumbents, holding one living<br>each, and about one half resident<br>on their benefices .....   | 754                                   | 3,239,020        |
|                       | 4254 Curates, licensed and unlicensed,<br>whose average stipends of about<br>75l. per annum, amounting to-<br>gether to 319,650l., are included<br>in the incomes of the pluralists<br>and other incumbents. |                                       |                  |

Total.....£9,459,565

## HOLY TRAFFIC.

THE following is a Scale of Charges put forth by an agent who keeps an office for the transaction of clerical business. I extract it from Mr. Beverley's recent Discourse, entitled, "The Tombs of the Prophets;" an effort, like his previous one, calculated to make the Bishops tremble.

"MR. ——— submits to the notice of the Clergy, a Scale of Charges for business intrusted to his care; he also takes this opportunity to express his acknowledgments for the very extensive patronage he has had during the last ten years, and to assure the Clergy that every Commission confided to his care will continue to be executed with fidelity and promptitude.

## TERMS;

## INTRODUCTORY FEE, ONE GUINEA,

*To be considered as part payment of the first commission exceeding that amount.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| For the Sale of an Advowson . . . . .                           | } If the purchase money does not exceed 4000 <i>l</i> 2½ per cent. |
| For the Purchase of an Advowson }                               | If the purchase money is above 4000 <i>l</i> .                     |
| For the Sale of the next Presentation to a Living . . . . .     | and under 7000 <i>l</i> , 2½ per cent.                             |
| For the Purchase of the next Presentation to a Living . . . . . | If the purchase money is above 7000 <i>l</i> .                     |
| For the Sale of a Chapel . . . . .                              | and under 10,000 <i>l</i> ., 2 per cent.                           |
| For the purchase of a Chapel . . . . .                          | } If the purchase money is above 10,000 <i>l</i> , 1½ per cent.    |
| For Procuring a Foreign Chaplaincy                              | } 5 per cent. on the amount of One Year's Emoluments.              |
| For Procuring a Lectureship . . . . .                           |  |
| For Procuring for a Client in Orders, a Curacy . . . . .        |  |
| For Purchasing an Exchange of a Living or a Curacy . . . . .    |  |

*Every description of Clerical Business transacted; Livings valued, 4*s*. 4*d*.*

FOR EVERY LETTER WRITTEN, 3*s*. 6*d*.

"Mr. ——— begs very respectfully to inform Clergymen who may, on account of absence or indisposition, desire to have their professional duty performed for them, that he has always the names of several highly respectable Clergymen on his books, ready to take occasional duty; and that, at two or three days notice, he can undertake to provide for any duty that may be required, either in or out of Town.

"Mr. ——— is also happy to add, that from his extensive connexion with the Clergy, he has not unfrequently (on being satisfied that the applicants are truly respectable, and likely to pass an examination) been enabled to obtain for a client a title for Holy Orders, with a Curacy, where required. *Fees, in this case, regulated according to circumstances.*

"Mr. ——— has generally on his books, an extensive list of Livings for sale, Curacies vacant, and also Livings, Chaplaincies, and Curacies for exchange.

An Inspection of the Letters of Orders, and testimonials of Clergymen, is always requested, previous to recommendation to any Curacy or Duty.

"Mr. ——— begs to state that all instructions received, and information given by him, relating to clerical affairs, are to be considered as *strictly confidential*.

"Mr. ——— has respectfully to request that, after the first communication of particulars, all letters which he may be required to write may be considered as subject to the above charge, excepting when a sale of Property is ultimately effected, in which case, the charge for correspondence is included in the commission, and, to give time for negotiation, no application is made during the first six months for any letters written.

"Mr. ——— begs further to state, that after the payment of his introductory fee, the party having done so will be entitled to **CONFIDENTIAL** Information for twelve months, respecting all or any of the Livings, Curacies, &c. on his books, for disposal or otherwise. The letters only containing the leading particulars being charged on the terms stated above. But in all cases where a purchase or exchange is effected, the commission only, as per above scale, is charged, and from such amount the Introductory Fee is deducted.

"When Mr. ——— is requested to leave Town for the purpose of valuing, or to inspect any Church Property, for sale or otherwise, a written agreement is always entered into respecting the charges for so doing, and generally those costs are included in his commission.

"To persons connected with the clerical or scholastic profession, who may have occasion to advertise, but are averse to the personal publicity which it involves, as well as the inconvenience of answering applications, Mr. ——— offers his services on the following terms: viz.—

For preparing an advertisement, causing the same to be inserted in a London or Country Newspaper, and receiving the personal or written answers at his Offices, 5s. for each advertisement, in addition to the Newspaper charge.

*Accounts invariably to be considered as due, and to be paid on delivery.*

#### ALL LETTERS MUST BE FREE OF POSTAGE.

"Mr. ——— begs to state, that for the first eight or nine years of the period during which he has had the honor of being concerned for the Clergy, no Introductory Fee was ever charged, but in consequence of the great number of Clergymen for whom he has been engaged, (upwards of 5000) a large portion of his time has been occupied, and he has been put to much trouble and expense, from motives of *mere curiosity*; therefore, in justice to himself, he has been compelled to adopt such a course, and he trusts, when Gentlemen perceive it is not either intended, or wished to make a charge, without affording an opportunity of receiving an equivalent for the said Fee, that his plan of conducting Clerical business will meet with **GENERAL**, as it has already met with *very extensive*, approbation; for it is an admitted fact, with those who are conversant in such matters, that they ought not to be conducted as *common business* usually is, and also that no arrangement relating to Church Property can be satisfactorily entered into, unless the parties concerned have confidence in each other."

## THE DAY OF RECKONING.

"In vain for the clergy does the thunder roll and the lightening flash in the distant clouds; they hear not, and they see not; and as the flood came upon the antediluvians when they were dancing, feasting, marrying, and giving in marriage, so will the day of confiscation come upon the priesthood, when they are gathering tithe, and feasting on their pluralities. It will find the Bishops moving up the steps of the Mithraic ladder to the seventh heaven of the Primacy; those right reverend fathers will be elbowing and pushing one another in their scramble for translations, grasping at more preferment, cramming their sons and nephews with spiritual guineas, bullying the Dissenters, and praising themselves; the inferior clergy will be severally at the card-table, watering-place, or cock-pit,—they will be leaping double ditches, imprisoning poachers, taking tithe in kind, dancing the gallopade, or firing off their artillery at grand buttus, when the deluge of Reform will come upon them in a moment, and overwhelm them in a wave of 'apostolical poverty,' and 'primitive economy.'"

## Correspondence.

[Last month I inserted a letter in favour of Co-operation, a subject which is now making some noise in the world:—the following is against it, and as discussion is the best mode of eliciting truth, I think it fair to hear both sides.—*Édit.*]

## To the Editor of the Moral Reformer.

(Re-printed from the Kendal Chronicle.)

SIR,—I have now before me No. 1 of the Lancashire Co-operator,—also, resolutions, &c., passed at the first meeting of the *Co-operative Congress*, held at Manchester, on Thursday and Friday, May 26th and 27th, 1831, and composed of delegates from co-operative societies, in all parts of the United Kingdom. I perceive there was one delegate from the co-operative society in Kendal. The following are extracts.

"That labour is the source or fountain of wealth.

"That the labouring people must, therefore, have created all wealth.

"That as they have created all riches, *they ought to be the richest class.*

"That those who labour would now be the richest persons, *if they had never worked for masters.*

"That under the present institutions, they work against, instead of for, each other's benefit.

"That as labour is the greatest value of all commodities, the labourers might, with a little capital, *employ themselves*, and gain the full value of their labour. That all shopkeepers, wholesale dealers, master manufacturers, merchants, &c., gain their incomes by the sale of the labour of the producers, *which the producers ought not to allow.* Should, however, the labourers sell their own produce, each might add, on the average, 70 to 100 per cent to his income, by turning it over several times.

"That this congress considers it highly desirable that a community on the principles of **MUTUAL CO-OPERATION, UNITED POSSESSIONS, and EQUALITY OF EXERTIONS**, and of the **MEANS OF ENJOYMENTS**, should be established in England as speedily as possible, in order to shew the practicability of the co-operative scheme.

"Let it ever be remembered that *Trading-Fund Associations* are only stepping stones to *communities of mutual co-operation*, they are only means to an end, which end should be kept constantly in view. Co-operation seeks to put the working classes in that situation where they shall enjoy the whole produce of their labour, instead of that small part called *Wages*."

From these extracts we learn what is the object, design, and end of co-operation. It is to establish a perfect equality in civil society; it professes to have nothing to do with religion; but to teach a morality far superior to what is taught in revelation. As rich and poor are only relative terms, we are to have neither, but **UNITED POSSESSIONS**. A reasonable person, who is only a little acquainted with human nature, might suppose that the community to be established, is to consist of a new creation of human beings, both as it respects body and mind; for in it there is to be no *lame* or *blind*, no *weak* or *strong*, all are to be possessed of the same mental qualifications, for it is to be founded upon "**an EQUALITY OF EXERTION and of the MEANS OF ENJOYMENTS**." Upon any other supposition than the above, all must admit that such a state of society is impossible.

That religion is founded upon the attributes of the deity, and is revealed in the christian scriptures, goes upon the principle that, there must always exist a gradation of rank in civil society, and not an equality. Hence we read of the duty of rich and poor—talented and not talented—master and servant, and on whatever part of the scale it be our lot to stand, the well-being of society depends upon the proper discharge of our duty, and for this we shall, hereafter, be *personally* accountable. The man who contends for an equality in civil society, must be an infidel to revealed religion.

It may be a question as to the wisdom of the labouring classes forming themselves into trading associations, for the purpose of exclusive trade; experience has taught us that large monopolies, with such objects in view, have always been injurious to the best interests of society; and, very frequently, of no advantage to those immediately concerned. It is true, that while the members of such associations continue to subscribe their 3*d*. per week, to purchase the necessaries of life with, and sell them to each other again at a profit, they must, if they have honest managers, accumulate a fund. The leaders of their trading associations teach, that any surplus fund they may have, "*they had better bury it in the ground than lend it out to interest*." What then is to be done with it? The Congress answers this question: "trust it to us, and as soon as you can spare 3*0*l., you shall have the privilege of electing one of your number to be a member of the co-operative community, (nothing is said about a wife and children.) This you are requested to do "*speedily*," and as soon as 200 Trading Associations have done so, a community of 200 will be immediately established in some part of England, with a capital of 6000*l*. which may serve as a "*model*," to shew the practica-

bility of the whole mass of society going into communities, on the principles of *mutual co-operation, united possessions, and equality of exertions, and the means of enjoyments.*" "Here the hands of the diligent will, indeed, make rich; here the hope, nay, the certainty of reward, will indeed sweeten labour."

Whatever my readers may think of this *scheme*, to me it appears *vain and visionary*. Its foundation is not laid, or its superstructure built, on the immutable principle of reason and justice. It is without any analogy in the whole course of divine providence, or God's government of his rational creatures. It is directly opposed to the plainest and most important precepts of the christian religion. And, to teach society that they ought to have *united possessions, &c.*, in order to enjoy happiness, is so delusive, and so sure to end in disappointment, that it is naturally calculated to produce disaffection, and, ultimately, a race of thieves and robbers upon principle, as it did among the ancient *Spartans*. It is my firm persuasion that co-operative communities must ultimately terminate in a *rope of sand*.

Yours respectfully,

WM. JENNINGS.

Kendal, July 19, 1831.

*To the Editor of the Moral Reformer.*

SIR,

I WAS much pleased to observe in your July number of the "*Moral Reformer*," that a gentleman of the name of George Edmondson had expressed his readiness to comply with an enquiry contained in one of your former numbers, as to the best method of self-education. Now, Sir, I am likewise a "*Plodder in the dark*," and wishful to obtain some directions as to the best method I can adopt in order to facilitate my acquisition of knowledge. And as I have no doubt but many of your readers, as well as myself, feel considerable interest in the subject, I beg to request that you will solicit Mr. Edmondson to communicate the methods of facilitating an acquirement of Grammar, and the hints on reading to which he alludes.

As "*Plodder in the dark*" does not appear disposed to explain the specific subjects on which he is desirous of obtaining information, I trust Mr. Edmondson will not, on that account, deprive us of the anticipated valuable communication.

I perceive, Sir, that Mr. Edmondson is a member of the Society of Friends, and as the members of that society are generally possessed of very considerable proficiency in common education, and as Mr. Edmondson is, I likewise perceive, by profession an Instructor, allow me earnestly to request that you will forward my wishes to him, and enforce the probable benefit that will accrue from his intelligence.

Your obedient Servant,

ANOTHER PLODDER IN THE DARK.

Preston, Aug. 6, 1831.

JOHN WALKER, PRINTER, CHURCH-STREET, PRESTON.